

THE EFFECT OF STUDENT AWARENESS OF GOALS ON SUCCESS IN
AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS A READING COURSE AT
GAZIOSMANPAŞA UNIVERSITY

A THESIS PRESENTED BY
DURSUN DEMİR
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ABSTRACT

Title: The effect of student awareness of goals on their success in and attitudes towards a reading course in Gaziosmanpaşa University.

Author: Dursun Demir

Thesis Chairperson: Dr. Sarah Klinghammer, Bilkent University, MA TEFL Program

Thesis Members: Dr. William Snyder, Bilkent University, MA TEFL Program;
Dr. Alev Yemenici, Middle East Technical University, Foreign Languages Department.

The present study investigated the effects of goal setting on students' success in and attitudes towards a reading course. Moreover, the study also revealed the relationship between attitudes towards reading in general and attitudes towards a reading course, attitudes and gender, and attitudes and proficiency level.

The study was conducted in the preparatory classes at Gaziosmanpaşa University, Tokat, Turkey. Fifty-two (twenty female, thirty-two male) pre-intermediate level preparatory students participated in this study.

The study sought to investigate three research questions. The first research question compared the relationship between the subjects' attitudes towards reading in general and toward their reading course, further differentiated according to gender and proficiency level. The second research question concerned the effect of goal setting on attitudes towards a reading course. The third research question concerned the effect of goal setting on success. Concerning the second and third research questions, two hypotheses were made: 1) Students who set their personal goals will show more positive attitudes than students in the control group. 2) Students who set their personal goals will

show higher performance than those in the control group. In order to investigate the research questions and test the hypotheses, two classes, one as the experimental and the other as the control group, were selected. Prior to the treatment both groups took an attitude survey and an achievement test.

The survey consisted of forty items. Subjects were asked to indicate their responses to each statement on a 5-point Likert-scale, from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The test consisted of fifty questions.

The experimental group was provided with the goal list of the reading course every week and required to write down some of the goals to be practiced in the subsequent week, whereas the control group just followed their regular syllabus. The treatment lasted for eight weeks.

After the treatment, both groups took the same survey and the same test they took prior to the treatment. The data were analyzed by running t-tests. The results of the pre-survey revealed that (a) Subjects had significantly more positive attitudes towards reading in general than they had towards the reading course ($p < .01$). (b) Female students had slightly more positive attitudes than male students but the difference was not significant. (c) High proficient students had more positive attitudes than low proficient students and the difference was significant ($p < .05$).

Post-survey results indicated that setting goals does not foster more positive students attitudes thus, the first hypothesis was rejected. Posttest results indicated that setting goals does not increase students success thus, the second hypothesis was rejected, also.

The findings of this study indicate that although setting goals fostered slightly more positive student attitudes towards a reading course and slightly increased their success in the same course, the changes were not statistically significant. However, it is difficult to make generalizations about the findings of the current study because of limitations of time and treatment.

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INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
MA THESIS EXAMINATION RESULT FORM

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The examination committee appointed by the for the Institute of Economics and
Social Sciences for the thesis examination of the MA TEFL student

Dursun Demir

has read the thesis of the student.

The committee has decided that the thesis of the student is satisfactory.

Thesis Title : The effect of student awareness of goals on their
success in and attitudes towards a reading course at
Gaziosmanpaşa University

Thesis Advisor : Dr. Sarah Klinghamer
Bilkent University, MA TEFL Program

Committee Members : Dr. William Snyder
Bilkent University, MA TEFL Program

Dr. Alev Yemenici
Middle East Technical University

We certify that we have read this thesis and that in our combined opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

Dr. William Snyder
(Chair)

Dr. Sarah Klinghammer
(Committee member)

Dr. Alev Yemenici
(Committee member)

Approved for the
Institute of Economics and Social Sciences

Kürşat Aydoğan

Director

Institute of Economics and Social Sciences

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Dedicated to the memory of my father
Hüseyin Demir

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to determine whether student awareness of personal goals increases academic success and improves attitudes towards a reading course. Moreover, the study investigates whether there is a relationship, between attitudes towards reading in general and attitudes towards a reading course, attitudes of male and female students, and those of high proficient and low proficient students.

The study was conducted in the preparatory classes at Gaziosmanpaşa University, Tokat, Turkey, in the spring of 2002. Two classes, one experimental group and the one control group, were selected for the study. Fifty-two (twenty female, thirty-two male) pre-intermediate level Turkish preparatory students aged from 17 to 26 participated in this study.

Background of the Study

Although goals of a course are written in the curriculum, students are generally believed to be unaware of these goals because goals are mostly set by teachers, supervisors, or administrators in Turkey. Students are rarely included in the goal setting process of the curriculum. However, if students are given a chance to set their own goals, this may increase their goal awareness. The researcher's hypothesis is that setting and being aware of their own goals may influence students' academic success and attitudes. Determining the effect of goal awareness for each student would be a time consuming task. Therefore, this study focused on one group of students and the effect of goal awareness on their success in and attitudes towards a reading course.

Reading, which is defined by Urquhart and Weir (1998) as “dealing with the message in written or printed form” (p. 14), is one of the four skills that is often taught

to language learners. Whether as preparatory classes or freshmen classes, most universities in Turkey have reading courses. Gaziosmanpaşa University is a Turkish-medium university where there are three English preparatory classes. Students from seven departments have the option of going to preparation classes. Among the preparation classes, there is a separate reading course to prepare the students to read academic texts related to their subjects in their subsequent years at the university. One of the factors that might affect the success of this course is the students' attitudes towards it.

Success is generally defined as the achievement of what somebody is trying to do. In terms of education, "success" refers to student achievement of the goals written in the curriculum. So, every school tries to establish an education program best able to help students achieve these goals. The aim of designing curriculums, choosing better materials, training teachers in teacher training courses, trying to use the latest technological devices in education, and spending money on education is to increase student success. Yet, these are not enough for successful education. As Brown (1994) suggests, there are some other factors, such as age, sex, personality, learning styles and strategies, acculturation, motivation, and attitudes that affect the success of any course. Attitudes are referred to as a person's positive or negative feelings towards an object, person, or situation (Beck, 2000). According to Savignon (1983), learners' attitudes are the most widespread and important variables in language acquisition. Savignon says that "... ultimate success in learning to use a second language would most likely to be seen to depend on the attitude of the learner" (p. 110). Cheng (1995) agrees that attitudes of learners may affect their success. Attitudes affect success via motivation. Day and

Bamford (1998) state that students with positive attitudes are more motivated to learn and those with poor attitudes are demotivated, and so they have difficulties in understanding the subject matter.

Attitudes are not permanent; they can be changed. So, it is important for teachers to know the sources of attitudes as, with such knowledge, they can help students change negative attitudes to positive ones. Day and Bamford (1998) state that there are four sources of attitudes toward second language reading which are “first language reading attitudes, previous experiences with learning to read second languages, attitudes toward the second language, culture, and people, and the second language classroom environment” (p. 23).

According to research carried out by Brooks (1996), there is a positive relationship between learning outcomes and attitudes toward the target language. While positive attitudes have been found to increase students’ proficiency, negative attitudes decrease it (Brown, 1994), so, it is important for teachers to try to foster positive student attitudes. In order to nurture positive attitudes towards reading, teachers can implement strategies such as avoiding repetition of unsuccessful teaching activities, using relevant, interesting, and enjoyable materials, and encouraging extensive reading (Brooks, 1996).

There is also a relationship between students’ positive attitudes and their setting personal goals. Whether students’ attitudes are influenced by goal setting was investigated by Wicker, Brown, Hagen, Boring, and Wiehe, (1991). They found that students have positive attitudes when they are aware of the goal they are trying to accomplish. The study also showed that setting difficult goals increased the study time and the importance students gave to the subject matter.

The term “awareness” has also been discussed and used in the field of language learning since the early 1980s (Fairclough, 1992). Awareness can be said to be learner consciousness about what they are doing and why they are doing it (Van Lier, 1996). Generally, some students are believed to be unaware of what they are learning and why they are learning it. Being given a chance to set their own goals for learning may make them aware of their goals, which, as a result, may lead to greater success and more positive attitudes towards a course.

Statement of the Problem

As stated earlier, in Turkey almost every university has reading courses. There are many factors that affect the success of these courses, one of which is believed to be the attitudes of the students toward the courses. The goals of the students may play an important role in influencing their attitudes, provided that students are aware of their goals. Since goals in a curriculum are mostly determined by instructors, administrators, or institutions in Turkey, students may be unaware of what the goals of a course are. One of the best ways to make students aware of goals is to help them set personal goals. This study aims to investigate whether student awareness of goals affects their success in and attitudes towards a reading course.

Significance of the Problem

While there have been a number of important studies about attitudes towards reading (Brooks, 1996; Frank, 2001; Gettys & Fowler, 1996; McKenna, 1997; Mosher, 1999;), the relationship between attitudes and success (Hogsten & Peregoy, 1999; Wagner, 1994) and the effect of goal setting on performance (Bennett, 2000; Page-Voth & Graham, 1999), there seems to be a gap in the literature about the attitudes of students

towards a reading course and the effects of goal setting on the attitudes of students towards a reading course, which are the topics of this study. Moreover, research on this topic seems to examine the attitudes of students towards reading in their mother tongue. However, this study investigates the attitudes of students towards a reading course in a second language, in this case English.

Revealing the attitudes of the students towards a reading course is important because, as Brooks (1996) and Waters, Martelli, Zakrajsek, and Popovich (1988) suggest, it is necessary for teachers to be aware of student beliefs and attitudes in order to be able to deal with them appropriately.

Also, although the study was carried out at Gaziosmanpaşa University, it may provide useful information to other universities with English courses.

Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

- 1) What are the attitudes of the students towards their reading course at Gaziosmanpaşa University, in Tokat?
- 2) Does the setting and awareness of personal goals affect students' attitudes towards the reading course?
- 3) Does the students' awareness of their goals affect their success in the reading course?

Hypotheses

The null hypothesis: The setting of personal goals and checking them every week doesn't affect students' success in and attitudes towards a reading course.

Experimental hypothesis 1: Students who set their personal goals each week will develop positive attitudes towards a reading course demonstrating more positive attitudes towards the reading course than the students in the control group, who do not set personal goals.

Experimental hypothesis 2: Students who set their personal goals each week demonstrate a higher level of performance than students in the control group.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of a goal setting process on students' reading achievement and attitudes toward their reading course. This study also seeks to investigate the relationships between attitudes towards reading and attitudes towards the reading course, attitudes and gender, and attitudes and proficiency level.

In this chapter, previous research in areas related to this study will be reviewed. The first section of this chapter deals with attitudes. Several factors which affect attitudes, promoting positive attitudes, and the attitude-achievement relationship are discussed. The second section focuses on goals. Here, literature on achievement goals, goal setting theory, the goal-achievement, and the goal-attitude relationship are reviewed.

Attitudes

Definition

The concept of attitude, which was researched and developed by social psychologists (Olson, & Zanna, 1993; Reutzel & Hollingsworth, 1991), has been the subject of many articles and studies over the past four decades. Although it is a complex concept (Day & Bamford, 1998), many definitions have been attempted to describe it. Beck (2000) defines attitude as a person's negative or positive feelings about a specific person, object, or situation. While Gardner (1985) uses the term to refer to an individual's beliefs and opinions about an object, Olson and Zanna (1993) use it to refer to a person's negative or positive evaluations of something. Therefore, attitudes can be

regarded as both relatively weak and strong emotional and affective responses toward an object (Beck, 2000).

Henerson, Morris, and Fitz-Gibbon, (1987) state that “self-esteem, self-perception, self-concept, self-confidence, and locus of control” are different aspects of attitudes and, thus, instruments devised to measure these properties indirectly measure attitudes, as well (p. 40).

In terms of reading, attitude is “ a state of mind, accompanied by feelings and emotions, that makes reading more or less probable” (Smith, 1991, p.1).

Attitudes are said to have three components: cognitive, affective, and conative. The cognitive components are the beliefs, opinions, information, and perceptions about the object; the affective components are one’s evaluations or feelings about it; and the conative components are concerned with one’s behavioral actions (Beck, 2000; McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995; Olson & Zanna, 1993). There is some disagreement about this categorization, for example, Alexander (1988) uses the term “behavior” instead of conation to refer to the individuals’ actions related to their feelings.

Apart from these three components of attitudes in general, Lewis and Teale (1980) developed a multi-dimensional conceptualization of reading attitudes. According to this conceptualization, a representation of reading attitudes consists of three components: the individual development factor (the value placed on reading as means of personal development); the utilitarian factor (the value placed on the role of reading as a means of educational or vocational achievement); and the enjoyment factor (the pleasure brought by reading). This conceptualization attempts to show that reading attitudes can affect individual and professional development as well as shape the use of spare time.

Factors Affecting Attitudes

In order to understand the influence of attitudes in academic settings, an in-depth look at the nature and factors that influence attitude development is necessary. By nature, attitudes are related to one's feelings, and therefore can easily be shaped by certain external factors. In the academic setting, these factors can be classified into five major groups: (a) demographic differences (b) home environment, (c) classroom environment, (d) teacher influence and (e) achievement.

Demographic factors include gender (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Friend, 1995; Hogsten & Peregoy, 1999; Shepston & Jensen, 1996;), chronological age (McKenna, 1994; Shepston & Jensen, 1996), intelligence (Day & Bamford, 1998; Mathewson, 1994), and ethnicity (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Walberg & Tsai, 1985). Studies focusing on gender differences concluded that girls had consistently more favorable attitudes towards reading than did boys (Hogsten & Peregoy, 1999; McKenna, 1997; Shepston & Jensen, 1996). A reason why girls had more positive attitudes than boys may be due to the fact that girls are better readers, and they engage in it for pleasure more than boys do (Hogsten & Peregoy, 1999), or may be due to societal values leading girls to develop reading abilities earlier than boys (McKenna, 1994). In the same regard, another study by Kelly (1986) indicated that a majority of the students in kindergarten to high school classes perceived reading as a girl's activity. Anderson, Tollefson and Gilbert (1985) found that students' attitudes become less favorable as they continue their education, so primary school students were found to have more positive attitudes towards reading than high school students. Further, the researchers stated that the change in students' attitudes may be due to the fact that as children grow older, more and more leisure activities

become available for them, which reading must compete with, so even the attitudes of successful readers may become less positive as they get older. However, there are some other studies like, Brooks (1996) and Smith (1990), which showed no change in the attitudes of students over time.

As to the factors affecting student attitudes caused by the classroom environment, curriculum (whether it meets students' needs or not), the organization of classroom, the type of instructional program and content, class size, the task, the material's difficulty, and teaching techniques are the most prominent (Fredericks, 1982; Rye, 1983). Baker (2000) argues that if students cannot develop the necessary abilities to cope with the tasks they have to do in the early school years, this may lead them to have negative attitudes towards those school subjects. In this regard, grouping students according to their abilities in secondary classrooms produced negative attitudes among poor readers (Shannon, 1980). Shannon also suggests that informing students about the nature and purpose of the tests they are going to take could help to reduce negative attitudes.

After agreeing with some of the factors mentioned above regarding the factors related to the teacher, Hogsten and Peregoy (1999) emphasize the importance of early intervention of teachers into the problems students have about reading to improve their attitudes. One of the other factors that affects reading attitudes is extensive reading. Since students can choose their materials according to their interests and stop reading whenever they wish, Day and Bamford (1998) suggest that extensive reading programs may foster positive attitudes.

Promoting Positive Attitudes

Affective concerns, such as attitudes, interests, motivation, locus of control, self-concept, feelings, and emotions, are important to reading and can affect a desire to read (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Gettys & Fowler, 1996; Mathewson, 1994; McKenna, Kear & Ellsworth, 1995). Moreover, the feelings of learners about the information they are trying to acquire affects their learning and usage of learned information afterwards (Cooter & Alexander, 1984). Therefore, trying to foster positive attitudes has been one of the major concerns for some researchers and one of the instructional goals of affective reading programs and curriculums (Day & Bamford, 1998; Lewis & Teale, 1980).

Day and Bamford (1998) state that knowing the sources of student attitudes toward second language reading may help teachers to foster positive attitudes in their students.

Figure 1 shows the sources of second language reading attitudes. As can be seen in Figure 1, the first source that may affect students' second language reading attitudes is first language reading attitudes. When learning a second language, students bring their first language reading attitudes into the learning environment. So, if their attitude concerning first language reading is positive, they are likely to begin second language reading with either a positive or negative attitude. Early experiences with reading affect the formation of reading attitudes. The factors that shape the first language reading attitudes are early experiences with reading, classroom environment, and the importance of reading in the first language culture. Likewise, previous experiences with learning to read other foreign languages, attitudes of students towards the second language, second language culture and people, and the second

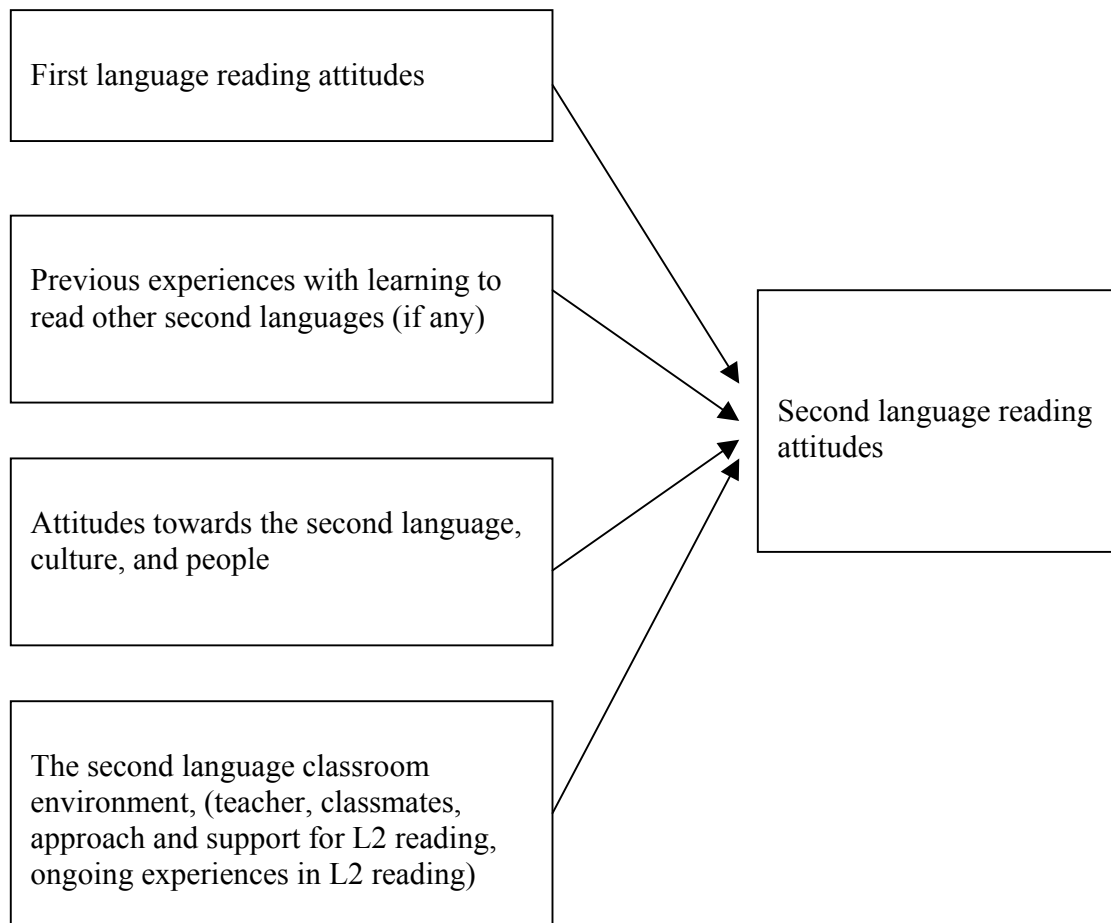


Figure 1- Model of the acquisition and development of second language reading attitudes. (taken from Day & Bamford, 1998, p. 23)

language classroom environment may positively or negatively affect the shape of second language reading attitudes.

Mathewson (1994) and McKenna (1994) make several suggestions about pedagogy that may help foster positive student attitudes towards reading. Some of them are:

- Helping students set personal goals leading to positive attitudes towards reading.

- Making students believe that various genres, content, and authors are worth reading
- Setting the classroom environment in such a way to support positive reading intentions
- Encouraging students to read materials that will bring them satisfaction
- Helping students read texts of suitable difficulty
- Teaching students reading strategies that will help them understand the text better and more easily
- Giving some external incentives
- Assessing students' beliefs about reading
- Instilling positive beliefs about reading
- Exposing students to a variety of genres and topics
- Providing early success
- Relating readings to students' own lives
- Exposing students to adults who show that reading is useful, relaxing, and fun.
- Providing positive student models
- Seeking parent involvement
- Reading aloud to students

Mathewson and McKenna's suggestions are particularly important to this study, because one of the hypotheses of this study is that students' setting personal reading goals may foster positive attitudes.

In a study designed to improve both students' vocabulary knowledge and attitudes towards reading, Mosher (1999) created weekly vocabulary lessons and increased silent and oral reading times. Participating in this study were twenty-three fourth grade students, some of whom were not native speakers of English. They responded to a Gates-MacGinite Vocabulary test and Elementary Reading Attitude Survey at the beginning of intervention. Throughout the study, students prepared weekly vocabulary lists consisting of ten words, took an extra twenty minutes of silent reading time, and two or three hour periods of weekly read-aloud sessions. Six months later, students took the same attitude survey and the vocabulary test which they took at the beginning of the study. A review of the results showed that students' attitudes related to both reading at home and reading in school improved substantially. The researcher also made note that when students' vocabulary knowledge increased, their own perceptions of their abilities increased as well.

In a similar study, Hudley (1992) examined the effects of using role models to improve high school girls' attitudes towards reading, school, and literacy in general. Once a week, students were exposed to presentations by different role models. Speakers shared with the students their experiences, successes, and collected wisdom. The treatment lasted for fifteen weeks and the results of the post survey indicated that students attitudes improved significantly.

Another study by Ivey and Broaddus (2001) showed that free reading time and teacher reading out loud activities are the two reading activities enjoyed most by students. So, focusing on these activities may foster positive attitudes. The students in

the study stated that the factor that motivated them the most was having a say in reading materials selection.

Research related to attitude change has produced some negative results as well. For example, Frank (2001) investigated the influence of a strategy-based reading workshop on parents' and children's attitudes. The subjects for this study ranged from below average to above average in terms of their reading abilities. The results did not indicate a significant difference in the attitudes of either parents or children.

It is obvious from the literature review that to promote positive attitudes it is important to learn the current attitudes of the students. This can be done by conducting an attitude survey, but research reveals that although teachers are aware of the importance of attitudes (McKenna, 1994), many of them are unaware of instruments which can be used to assess attitudes toward reading (Heathington & Alexander, 1983) and, therefore, they try to assess them informally, and sometimes even unconsciously (Alexander, 1988). However, conducting a formal survey will provide teachers and curriculum specialists with information which can be used in the selection and design of instructional materials that may foster positive attitudes in students (Swanson, 1982; Waters, Martelli, Zakrajsek, & Popovich, 1988). This is important because research shows that material which stimulates positive attitudes is comprehended more easily than material which stimulates negative attitudes (Rye, 1983).

Attitude and Achievement

To make students lifelong and successful readers, teachers and parents should consider attitude as the most important affective component for learning. It is assumed that students have certain attitudes toward each subject they study in school. These

attitudes influence the studying behavior and achievement of the students. For example, students with favorable attitudes towards a given subject are expected to learn more about that subject because they like it and enjoy learning about it. Day and Bamford (1998) argue that although teachers are aware of the importance of affective variables such as attitudes, they seldom include them into their reading pedagogy.

Students' attitudes have often been positively correlated with motivation and achievement (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Brooks, 1996; Day & Bamford, 1998; Hogsten & Peregoy, 1999; McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Baker and Wigfield note that motivation is a result of positive attitudes and so, children harboring more positive attitudes are more motivated to read. Similarly, McKenna, Kear and Ellsworth (1995) and Mathewson (1994) suggest that motivated readers will have positive attitudes towards reading and thus will engage more in reading. Since attitude, interest, and motivation seem to have such an effect on students' abilities, high degrees of student ability and efforts to increase the quality of instruction may not be enough for achievement if students have negative attitudes (Walberg & Tsai, 1985).

The first studies carried out to discover attitude-achievement correlation date back to the 1950s. Although it attracted researchers' attention most in the 1970s, it was still the subject of some studies in the 1990s. In one of these studies, Hogsten and Peregoy (1999) tried to investigate the relationship between reading attitudes, self-perceptions, and reading achievement. One hundred fifty-five students in grades two and six completed the Estes Reading Attitude Scale to measure their attitudes toward three content areas, reading, math and science, and the About Myself Scale to measure their self-perceptions. Eighty-three of these students were above grade level and seventy-two

of them were below grade level. Scores were analyzed on the basis of grade level, reading level, and gender. Results indicated that (1) reading attitudes and self-perceptions of second grade students were more positive than sixth grade students, (2) girls had more positive attitudes than boys, (3) below grade level readers in both the second and sixth grades had less positive attitudes towards reading, science, and math. In terms of why below grade level students scored less positive attitudes, the researchers suggest that this may be due to their early poor proficiencies in these content areas. It is also possible however, that attitude was related to the early poor proficiency.

Brooks (1996) and Smith (1990) state that relatively few studies have been carried out about the attitudes of adults towards reading probably due to a lack of adequate attitude measures. In one of these, Brooks investigated the relationship between reading attitudes of adults and their reading performance. Participants of the study were 129 adult learners from both high school and college populations. Based on the scores obtained from proficiency tests, subjects were identified as remedial or proficient readers. Subjects completed a Short Form Reading Attitude Survey which included eighteen statements regarding reading. The results of the study indicated that (1) proficient high school students had positive attitudes towards reading while remedial high school students had negative attitudes and the difference was statistically significant. (2) college students, whether remedial or proficient, had generally positive attitudes towards reading and there was no statistically significant difference between their attitude scores. Based on this results the researcher stated that as students mature, their attitudes mature as well and when they reach college level, they regard reading with greater importance.

The results of the studies on the relationship between positive attitudes and achievement are not always consistent. Often a positive relationship is seen between favorable attitudes and higher achievement; but opposite cases are also reported (Alexander, 1988). According to Lewis and Teale (1980) the reason for conflicting results may be due to an inadequate definition of attitudes toward reading which affects the content and shape of attitude scales.

In another study about adult attitudes, Smith (1990) examined the stability of reading attitudes from early childhood to the middle-adult years. Eighty-four adults, many of whom were over forty, participated in this study. Their attitudes were assessed in (a) 1st, 6th, 9th, and 12th grades, (b) five years after high school graduation, and (c) 21 or 26 years following high school graduation. The results revealed that: (a) the college graduate group had significantly higher attitude scores than did the high school group, (b) there was a significant difference between the attitude scores of occupational groups in that the professional group (teacher, banker, engineer, etc.) had more positive attitudes than the labor group, (c) females had significantly higher attitude scores than males, (d) attitudes showed some degree of stability over time with no significant differences among children and adults. Based on these findings, the researcher stated that positive attitudes that are fostered, especially during the later school years, will remain positive in adulthood and since attitudes of individuals do not change over time, development of positive attitudes in children should be emphasized. These results also suggest that studies carried out to reveal the attitudes of children can be used to refer to the attitudes of adult students.

Goals

Definition

The term “goal” has been mostly used in psychology and education. In psychology, “goal” is defined as the thing an individual is trying to attain. “It is the object or aim of an action” (Latham, 2000, p. 115). In education, the term is mostly used in curriculum development studies to refer to general statements of a program. Goals are important components of a curriculum, because as Brown (1995) suggests “a curriculum will often be organized around the goals of the program” (p.72). Moreover, having goals means that you can decide at the end of the process whether you achieved what you have wanted to achieve (Day & Bamford, 1998).

Another term that is used throughout the goal setting process is “task”. It refers to a piece of work to be done. A difficult task is one that is hard to do. Writing a book is, for example, a harder task than writing a thank you note (Locke & Latham, 1990). The difficulty of tasks is related to goal achievement, as discussed below.

Literature on achievement goals classifies the goals that individuals try to attain into two different groups. The groups have been labelled differently by different theorists: mastery versus performance (Ames, 1992), learning versus performance (Elliot & Dweck, 1988), and task versus ego (Nicholls, 1984). According to Somuncuoglu and Yildirim (1999) the common criteria in classifying achievement goal orientations is related to whether the orientation perceives learning as a tool or an end in itself. In this study, the terms mastery and performance will be used to differentiate the two groups.

Students who have mastery goals try to develop new skills, understand their work, and promote their competence, whereas students with performance goals try to do

better than others, attain success with little effort, and be above standards. So, students with performance goals perceive learning as a way to attain a desired goal and focus their attention on attaining success (Ames, 1992). Table 1 illustrates the detailed characteristics of mastery and performance goals.

Climate dimensions	Mastery goal	Performance goal
Success defined as...	Improvement, progress	High grades, high normative performance
Value placed on...	Effort/learning	Normatively high ability
Reasons for satisfaction...	Working hard, challenge	Doing better than others
Teacher oriented toward...	How students are learning	How students are performing
View of errors/mistakes...	Part of learning	Anxiety eliciting
Focus of attention...	Process of learning	Own performance relative to others
Reasons for effort...	Learning something new	High grades, performing better than others
Evaluation criteria...	Absolute, progress	Normative

Table 1. Achievement goal analysis of classroom climate (taken from Ames & Archer 1988, p. 261).

As can be seen in the table, there are differences between mastery and performance goals in terms of the definition of success, view of errors, reasons for study, and evaluation criteria. While mastery goals seem to perceive learning as an end in itself, performance goals seem to perceive learning as a tool to use to outperform others.

Mastery goals (e.g. “I want to learn as much as possible”) have been linked to a belief that effort leads to success (Ames, 1992), a preference for difficult work, risk taking (Ames & Archer, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988), and positive attitudes towards learning (Ames & Archer, 1988). Students with mastery goals have also been found to spend more time on learning tasks, persist more against difficulties (Elliott & Dweck,

1988), and engage more in effective learning and problem solving strategies (Ames, 1992).

However, performance goals (e.g. “It is important for me to do better than other students”) have been linked to avoidance of difficult tasks (Elliott & Dweck, 1988), negative affect after failure, positive affect after success with little effort, and use of short term learning strategies such as memorizing (Ames, 1992). Since the focus of students with performance goals is on their ability and “normative performance”, students who think that they don’t have the necessary abilities to attain a goal avoid challenging tasks (Ames, 1992). Therefore, Ames suggests that since mastery goals lead to long term and high quality learning, they should be emphasized in classroom settings.

In terms of achievement goals-motivation relationships, Elliot and Harackiewicz (1994) and Harackiewicz and Elliot (1993) state that both goal types are associated with intrinsic motivation and they found as a result of their studies that mastery goals had a more positive effect on intrinsic motivation than do performance goals.

In addition to the two goal types mentioned above, Meece, Blumenfeld, and Hoyle (1988) and Meece and Holt (1993) talk about a third goal type, work-avoidance goals, in which students try to get the work done with minimum effort. Students adopt this goal to avoid failure or to show their negative attitudes towards schoolwork (Meece, Blumenfeld & Hoyle, 1988). For the purposes of this study, work avoidance goals will not be emphasized.

Different researchers have different opinions on how students choose what kind of achievement goals to attain. Ames (1992) and Meece, Blumenfeld and Hoyle (1988), for example, suggest that students’ prior experiences, achievements, failures, parents’

goals and beliefs, characteristics of the learning situation, tasks and activities done in the classroom, and student needs and competencies all affect whether learners choose mastery or performance goals. On the other hand, Newman (1988) claims that students may try to attain both goal types together at any given time without having to make a choice between them. Meece, Blumenfield and Hoyle (1988) also believe that students' choosing and trying to attain these goals influences their cognitive, affective, and behavioral patterns. As stated earlier in this literature review, the same terms, cognitive, affective, and behavioral, are used to define attitudes. This similarity suggests that attitudes and goals may be interrelated and thus they may influence each other, as is hypothesized in this study.

A study by Harackiewicz, Barron, Tauer, Carter and Elliott (2000) investigated the effects of achievement goals on six hundred forty-eight students in an introductory psychology course. The study continued for one semester. Students' achievement goals were measured at the beginning, study strategies in the middle, and interests at the end of the semester. Their final grades were obtained from the departments as well.

The results of the study showed that students who adopted mastery goals reported higher levels of interest in psychology than students who adopted performance and work avoidance goals. On the other hand, students with performance goals achieved higher grades than students who did not endorse performance goals and students with work avoidance goals were those who were less interested in the course and received lower grades. Based on these findings, the researchers stated that achievement goals of the students are related to their interest in psychology, enjoyment of lectures, and final grades in the course.

In addition to some of the benefits mentioned above, goals, whether mastery or performance, provide a standard by which students can see their progress (Guthrie, Cox, Knowles, Buehl, Mazzoni & Fasulo, 2000), lead students to discover the pleasurable aspects of a given academic activity (Locke & Latham, 1990), and inform students of what they are expected to acquire (Print, 1980).

In a similar sense, Alegre and Moss (1999) argue that if students have goals in their minds, they study more. They also suggest that students' setting their own goals gives them a voice in their instruction, increases their motivation and confidence, and leads them to spend more time on their studies outside of class. Therefore, they suggest teachers draw a framework in which students write their personal goals and the steps through which they can attain these goals, and at the end, assess whether they have achieved their goals or not.

Goal Setting Theory

Research on motivation reveals that most researchers used goal setting as a way of motivating employees in industrial settings and students in academic settings. Madden (1997), for example, investigated how teachers motivate their students and found that goal setting was the most frequently employed method used.

One of the important researchers to focus on goal setting is Locke (1968). He developed a theory of goal setting and claimed that goals affect performance in general and sometimes affect behavior. According to this theory, there are three ways by which goals can be set. They can be set participatively, they can be assigned by supervisors or administrators, or individuals can choose their own goals.

Latham (2000) points out that goal-setting theory has been accepted by so many researchers that it has been tested with over 40,000 people in various countries both in laboratory and field settings, the research including about eighty-eight different tasks. Basically the theory has four claims:

1. Specific hard goals, whether they are self-set, set participatively, or assigned, produce higher performance than easy goals, no goals, or a goal of “do your best”.
2. “The higher the goal the higher the performance” provided that individuals’ ability is constant and they accept the goals.
3. Variables such as feedback, praise, or the involvement of supervisors’ or administrators’ affect goal commitment and its results, provided that they lead to the setting of and commitment of specific hard goals.
4. Goal setting influences motivational variables such as choice, effort, and persistence to achieve the goal.

In order to derive the motivational benefits of goal setting, the theory requires four sub-principles which are:

a) The goal must be both specific and hard. This is necessary because people generally adjust their level of effort according to the difficulty of the goal. People with low goals will be satisfied with a little success, and will rarely have a chance to develop their abilities. Goal specificity, however, will lead individuals to give more of their attention to the goal. Moreover, goals give individuals a chance to judge their adequacy and success, and specific hard goals lead people to work faster and harder in a given unit of time. As a result, individual satisfaction increases as well.

b) Feedback must be provided during the process. A study by Schunk and Swartz (1993) revealed that students in the goal condition who received feedback demonstrated higher performance than students who did not receive feedback.

c) Goal commitment must be maintained. Although setting a goal leads individuals to find ways to attain the goal, it may not always work. People in some cases may reject the goals. In such cases, encouraging individuals to focus on the outcomes and increasing their self-efficacy may lead to goal commitment. In terms of goal commitment, there is no difference between assigned and chosen goals. Both of them may lead to goal commitment. In choosing a goal, individuals have a say in the process, while assigning the goal implies that the individual is capable of attaining it.

d) Resources must be provided to attain the goal. These resources include time, money, people, and equipment. It may not be possible to attain goals if some or all of these resources are lacking.

After explaining all these steps, Latham (2000) claims that “No other theory of motivation has been found to be as consistently effective in the workplace as goal setting” (p. 117).

In addition to the properties mentioned above, writing down the goals, stating them positively, setting properties, and being precise help individuals attain goals more easily (Setting Goals Effectively, n.d.).

Effects of Goal Setting on Achievement

Studies focusing on the effects of goals on performance date back to the 1960s. There seem to be two particular fields in which experiments took place, education and industry. In one of these studies, Page-Voth and Graham (1999) investigated the effects

of goal setting and strategy use on the writing performance and self-efficacy of students with writing and learning disabilities. Participants in the study were thirty seventh and eighth graders who were randomly assigned to one of the three groups: goal setting, goal setting plus strategy, and control. Students in the two experimental groups composed three essays, trying to attain different goals when writing each paper, while students in the control group were given no goal but only required to write three essays. Results showed that although there were no significant differences between the two experimental groups, papers written by these two groups were longer, included more supporting details, and were qualitatively better than essays written by students in the control group. These results suggest that students with assigned goals outperform others whether they are provided with the necessary strategies to achieve the goals or not.

Schunk and Rice (1991) state that if students are provided with goals and they try to attain them, they are more likely to attend the class and they pay more attention to the activities done in the classroom, which, as a result, increases their achievement. On the other hand, in the absence of a learning goal, students may be less motivated to work, and they may not be very sure of their capabilities because they lack standards against which they can compare their abilities. In their study, Schunk and Rice provided students in the experimental groups with one goal, finding the main idea, and found that students increased their achievement in the reading course.

In a different study, Rothkopf and Billington, (1975) investigated the effects of specific descriptions of learning goals on learning from the text. Subjects read a 600-word text. One hundred thirty-eight volunteer college students were divided into three groups. Students in the first treatment group were provided with a list of twelve learning

goals. Students in the second treatment group were provided with a longer list of goals (twenty four goals), and students in the control group were provided with no learning goals but told to learn as much as possible.

Following the study, a test was carried out which consisted of: (a) items relevant to goals, (b) items not directly relevant to goals, but topically related to goals which came from the same immediate neighborhood of the goal relevant material, (c) incidental items that were not related to goals.

The results were consistent with the hypothesis of the researchers;

1. Specific descriptions of learning goals produced higher performance on goal relevant items than the general directions given to the control group.
2. Subjects who received the longer list of goals (second treatment group) produced lower performance than the subjects who received shorter list of goals (first experimental group)
3. Subjects in both treatment groups produced lower performance on incidental items than the control condition.
4. The test items from the same topical neighborhood as the goal relevant materials produced somewhat mixed results.

According to the results of this study, it can be said that describing learning goals to the students has a positive effect on students' achievement if the list of goals is not very long. Moreover, description of goals not only affects the learning of goal relevant items but also has a substantial effect on the learning of items from the same topical neighborhood. However, the description of goals doesn't have any positive effect on incidental items.

Effects of Goals on Attitudes

Although many researchers point out that goals and goal commitment affect attitudes (Busch, 1998; Day & Bamford, 1998; Mathewson, 1994; Sideridis & Kaissidis, 2001), it seems that the goal setting-attitude relationship has not attracted as much attention as the goal setting-achievement relationship in the literature. Sideridis and Kaissidis-Rodafinos (1998) focus on the self-importance and attitude relationship and state that "attitudes, self-esteem, actual ability, or other background variables are altered as a function of the self-importance one places on achieving a certain goal or performing a behavior" (p. 94). This statement suggests that goal setting should be followed by goal commitment (self-importance) in order to see any change in attitudes.

Bennett (2000) investigated the effects of goal setting and motivational tools on sixth grade students' writing achievement and attitudes. To increase their motivation, participants were given a choice as to which academic subject to set goals for. In the survey, students were asked about their feelings and attitudes towards school, themselves, and the goal setting process. An interview was used along with the survey. Thus, quantitative and qualitative data were gathered together.

The results revealed that students who participated in creating their academic goals to improve their writing developed positive attitudes towards both the subject and themselves, and got higher scores in the writing course. The researcher further stated that goal setting and motivational tools are highly effective procedures to use in classroom settings in that when students are allowed to set their own goals for their learning, they take responsibility, develop an intrinsic desire to attain the goal, and develop their own learning styles.

Similar results were reported by Busch (1998) and Deloris (1992). In his study, Busch investigated the relationship between attitudes towards a managerial program, self-efficacy, and goal commitment. The participants for the study were one hundred and nineteen employees whose education levels ranged from high school to university degrees. Participants were given three questionnaires (one for self-efficacy, one for goal commitment, and one for attitudes towards the program). Regression analysis indicated that individuals who had a high commitment to goals and individuals who had high efficacy had more positive attitudes towards the managerial program.

In another study, Deloris (1992) investigated whether some different strategies, like setting reading goals, keeping a daily log, read-aloud sessions, daily sustained silent reading periods, and providing interesting reading materials changed the attitudes of seventeen fifth graders who were unmotivated and uninterested in reading. The results revealed that students' attitudes toward reading improved, and they read more.

A study with different results was done by Gaa (1973), who investigated whether individual goal setting conferences affected achievement, attitudes, and goal setting behavior of fifty-four elementary students. He divided these students into three groups: goal setting, conference, and control. Students in the goal setting group participated in weekly individual conferences with an experimenter. In these conferences, the goal setting procedure was explained and the importance of goals was emphasized. The students were asked to write down the goals they wanted to accomplish during the subsequent week.

Students in the conference group received individual conferences on goal setting procedure, but they didn't set specific goals. The control group didn't receive any

conferences, but received the same classroom instruction as the goal setting and conference groups and were administered the same achievement test and attitude measurement.

As a result of this study, the achievement scores of the students in the goal setting group were significantly higher than those of students in the conference and control groups. But there was no significant difference between the attitudes of these three groups. The researcher further pointed out, however, that since attitudes towards reading tend to be deep rooted, a four week treatment period may not have been long enough to affect a change (Gaa, 1973).

This chapter reviewed the literature on attitudes and achievement goals as they relate to this study and the next chapter will give information on the participants, materials, procedures, and the data analysis.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the effects of students' setting their personal goals on their success in and attitudes towards a reading course. In addition, this study investigated whether there was any relationship between attitudes towards reading and attitudes towards the reading course, differentiating further between the male and female students, and high proficient and low proficient students. The study, then, focused on the following questions:

- 1) What are the attitudes of the students towards their reading course at Gaziosmanpaşa University, in Tokat?
- 2) Does the setting and awareness of personal goals affect students' attitudes towards the reading course?
- 3) Does the students' awareness of their goals affect their success in the reading course?

The study employed an attitude survey to assess the effects of goal awareness on students' attitudes and a test to assess the effects of goal awareness on students' success.

This methodology chapter contains four sections. First, subjects and their characteristics are described in detail. The second section provides information about the materials used in this study. Third, in the procedure section, an in-depth description is given about how the study was conducted. Finally, the data analysis section describes how the data were collected and analyzed in the study.

Subjects

The study was conducted in Gaziosmanpaşa University English preparatory classes, at the pre-intermediate level of instruction. The Department of Foreign Languages is a preparatory school which gives instruction in general English so as to enable students to be able to use English resources related to their fields in the various faculties at Gaziosmanpaşa University, where the medium of the instruction is Turkish. At the Department of Foreign Languages, students who want to learn English in preparatory classes are given a placement test at the beginning of the academic year and then grouped according to the results of the test. Students are placed into pre-intermediate or elementary groups according to the results of this test. Each class is composed of approximately thirty students.

For the purpose of the present study, two of these pre-intermediate classes were chosen, based primarily on the instructor's willingness to participate. The second reason why these two classes were chosen was to eliminate the teacher variable, as these two classes were taught by the same instructor. The rationale behind choosing the pre-intermediate level was that all three prep classes were placed into the elementary level that year. Since the study was conducted in the second semester, the students in these classes were at the pre intermediate level when the study was conducted. One of these two classes was used as the experimental group and the other was used as the control group. There was a total of fifty-nine students in the two classes. However, only fifty-two of them participated in this study. The mean age of these subjects was 20.02 years ranging between 17 and 26. All of the subjects were Turkish and their native language was Turkish.

The class selected as the experimental group was composed of students whose first semester reading grade range was from 17 to 89; the same figure range was from 10 to 87 for the control group. These students represented various university departments, including the Faculty of Agricultural Engineering, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Faculty of Arts, Nursing, and the Vocational High School. After successfully completing their studies in the prep program, students were planning to take courses in their departments.

As mentioned above, not all the fifty-nine students in both classes participated in the study because three students in the experimental group and four students in the control group were not present on the day of the pretest and pre survey. Therefore a total of fifty-two students in both classes took the pretest and pre survey. These fifty-two students were used as a sample to answer the first research question. Three of the students who took the pretest and pre survey in the experimental group, and five of the students who took the pretest and pre survey in the control group did not take the posttest and post survey. Moreover, since seven students in the experimental group who took the test and the survey failed to carry out the requirements of the treatment, they had to be excluded from the study. So, a total of thirty-seven students (eighteen in the experimental, nineteen in the control group) were used as a sample to answer the second and third research questions. Detailed information about these subjects is given in Table 2.

Materials

Materials used in the present study included a goal list, a goal check-list, individual student goal cards, an attitude survey (devised by the researcher) and a

Table 2

Characteristics of Subjects by Group

<u>Group</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Experimental	11	7	18
Control	9	10	19

reading comprehension test (devised by the researcher) used as pretest and posttest.

Goal List

Using different examples of lists from the literature, the researcher designed a goal list for a reading course to be used throughout the study (see Appendix A). This goal list was negotiated with the teacher of the reading course who would be teaching in both control and experimental groups in order to omit the goals which would not be taught and practiced throughout the eight week period. The list the researcher first designed included twenty general goals for a reading course. After the negotiation, the list was reduced to nineteen goals.

Goal Check-list and Cards

In addition to the goal list, the researcher designed a goal checklist for the teacher on which she could tick the goal or goals that were taught and practiced each week throughout the intervention (see Appendix B).

The researcher also prepared small cards on which students were to write down their personal goals for the subsequent week (see Appendix C). Every student in the

experimental group was provided with eight cards, one for each week.

Attitude Survey

Since all the surveys in the literature were designed to measure the attitudes of students towards reading in general, an attitude survey consisting of forty items was developed by the researcher to assess students' attitudes towards a specific reading course (see Appendix D). The survey was designed to measure attitudes toward reading assignments, reading work load, success in the reading course, new vocabulary in the reading course, preferences of students in the reading course, tests in the course, difficulty of the course, and reading in English.

The survey, which was written in English first and then translated into Turkish to ensure students' understanding, had two sections. The first section asked about students' background (sex, age, department, first semester reading grade). The second section included forty statements to assess students' attitudes towards the reading course. A five-point Likert scale, with "strongly agree", "agree", "undecided", "disagree", and "strongly disagree" options, was used as the respond format. Some of the items (3, 5, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 17, 19, 20, 23, 26, 28, 30, 34, 37, 39) on the survey were negative statements and the rest positive, which had to be taken into consideration in the statistical data analysis.

The first draft of the survey (Turkish version) was piloted with a class similar to the sample to be used as subjects. The pilot study was carried out at Middle East Technical University with seventeen pre intermediate level students. The pilot study showed that items were clear enough for students to understand, so no changes were

made in the survey. Then, the Turkish version of the survey was administered to the target population.

Pretest and Posttest

Since the students were at the pre intermediate level when the pretest and the attitude survey were administered, an achievement test for the pre-intermediate level was designed by the researcher (see Appendix E). In order to prepare this achievement test, four quizzes and two midterm tests that were administered in both experimental and control classes in the first term were examined and the same question types, which students were familiar with, were used in this achievement test. The same test, with some changes in the order of the options, was used both as the pretest and the posttest.

Three reading comprehension passages (the first two of them including approximately 300 words each and the third one 50 words) were selected from three different course books, *Passages*, *Task Reading*, and *Face the Issues* (see Appendix E for the passages). One of the passages was about the life of Elvis Presley, the second was a story in which a girl tried to get through some problems caused by her parents' divorce, and the third one was about a bank robbery.

These passages were selected for two reasons. First, the topics, genre, style, and proficiency level of these passages were similar to those which students were reading in their regular reading classes. Second, the lexical items these three passages included were familiar to the students from their reading courses.

The test consisted of three sections. The first section included four skimming and scanning questions based on the first reading passage. The second section consisted of thirty-eight multiple-choice questions about each of the first and second reading

passages. Each multiple-choice question contained three choices: one correct answer and two distracters. The third section consisted of eight fill-in-the-blanks questions about the third passage. The subjects were given two minutes for skimming and scanning questions and a total of sixty minutes for other questions and survey items.

The first draft of the test was piloted at Middle East Technical University with seventeen pre intermediate level students. After the pilot, some changes both on the wording and options of three questions were made since they caused misunderstandings for students.

Data Collection Procedures

On November 30, 2001, after receiving permission from the Gaziosmanpaşa University preparatory school administration to carry out the research, the researcher administered a questionnaire to see whether students in both classes were aware of their reading goals or not since such awareness would make this study unnecessary (see Appendix F for the questionnaire). For this questionnaire, four open-ended questions were prepared and then translated into the students' native language for reliability reasons. Fifty-two students in two classes were asked these questions and their responses were analyzed in terms of reading goals.

On March 11, 2002 an attitude survey was given to the subjects in both experimental and control groups simultaneously. On the first page of the survey, the students read the explanation, which assured them that the right to participate was voluntary (see Appendix G for informed consent form). Then, subjects were requested to answer five background questions. On the second page, the students were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed with each of forty statements.

After the attitude survey, a pretest was given to all subjects. The teachers stayed in the classes during the test and survey in order to monitor and help if necessary. The researcher checked in on each class during the test and survey, answering any questions the subjects might have had. He also told them the importance of their providing honest answers.

According to the results of the pretest, the class that got lower scores from the pretest was chosen as the experimental group in order to show that goal setting can increase the success of even less successful students. After the pretest, subjects in the experimental group were given an orientation to train them on the set of goals for the reading course. During this orientation, the control group was provided with storybooks from the library of the department to do extensive reading.

For the experimental group orientation, the researcher prepared two reading passages to be used as examples (see Appendix H). The passages were selected from two different course books, *Reader at Work I* and *Language In Use*. The first passage was about a man who goes to the cinema with his dog, and the second one was about the climate of Egypt. Along with these two passages, the goal list which was negotiated with the teacher of the course beforehand was used.

The orientation session took eighty minutes. During the orientation, the importance of the goals, how the goals of a curriculum are set, and the relationship among goals-teaching, goals-material, goals-testing and goals-achievement were taught to the students. Each goal on the goal-list was also explained in detail and practiced using the two reading passages prepared for this orientation session. Each student was provided with eight cards to be used each week to write down their goals for the week

and students were told how to use these goal cards. The teacher was also provided with a goal list to check the goals that would be practiced in class each week. Moreover, the teacher was oriented in order to be sure that she taught the same list of goals in both classes and, as far as possible, taught the same material the same way to both classes.

The treatment took eight weeks. During this time, subjects in the experimental group were provided with the goal list of the course every week, and they were required to choose and write down three to five of the course goals on their cards to be practiced in the subsequent week. When the teacher delivered the material, she asked students to find which goal(s) the activities referred to. So, the students had a chance to make a connection between the goals they wrote on their cards and those they practiced in the lesson. At the end of every week, the teacher ticked each goal that was practiced in the class on the goal checklist. Although the treatment was planned to continue for eight weeks, because of a national holiday and the illness of the teacher, the experimental group had five weeks of treatment, which might have affected the results of the study negatively. In addition, the teacher was supposed to prepare a self-report at the end of each lesson to explain how the goals were practiced but, because of a misunderstanding, this part of the procedure was not implemented. The subjects in the control group were not provided with any goal list; they just followed their regular syllabus.

Eight weeks later, on May 02, 2002, the same attitude survey and the same test were administered to all subjects in both experimental and control groups.

Variables

The dependent variables of this study were students' success in and attitudes toward the reading course. Student success was assessed by a pretest and posttest which

were administered at the beginning of the second semester and eight weeks after the second semester began. Their attitudes were assessed by the survey designed by the researcher.

Students' setting and checking their personal goals every week in the experimental group and the teacher's classroom behavior in both classes were the independent variables in this study.

Hypotheses

The null hypothesis: The setting of personal goals and checking them every week doesn't affect students' success in and attitudes towards a reading course.

Experimental hypothesis 1: Students who set their personal goals each week develop positive attitudes towards a reading course and demonstrate more positive attitudes towards a reading course than the students in the control group, who do not set personal goals.

Experimental hypothesis 2: Students who set their personal goals each week demonstrate a higher level of performance than the students in the control group.

Analytical Procedures

After finishing the data collection, the items in the survey were analyzed. Scoring the Likert scale involved assessing values from 1 to 5. The scoring for the positive statements was as follows: Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, undecided = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 1. The scoring for the negative statements was as follows: Strongly agree = 1, Agree = 2, undecided = 3, Disagree = 4, Strongly disagree = 5. Item scores were averaged to obtain the mean values of attitudes towards the reading course.

As for the test results, each correct answer was scored one point. Wrong or omitted items were given zero points. The total possible maximum score for the reading test was 50 points. The students receiving 29 and more were defined as high proficient and those who received 19 and lower were defined as low proficient students.

After the scoring, five t-tests were run to find out the differences between (a) attitudes towards reading in general and attitudes towards the reading course, (b) attitudes of male and female subjects, (c) attitudes of high proficient and low proficient subjects, (d) attitude scores of the experimental and control groups according to post survey results, (e) posttest results of both groups.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

Summary of the Study

In this study, the effect of student awareness of goals on their attitudes and achievement was examined. In addition, the study investigated whether there was a relationship between attitudes towards reading in general and attitudes towards a reading course, attitudes of male and female students, and attitudes of high proficient and low proficient students. It was hypothesized that:

1. Students who set their personal goals each week develop positive attitudes towards a reading course and demonstrate more positive attitudes towards the reading course than the students in the control group, who do not set personal goals.
2. Students who set their personal goals each week demonstrate a higher level of performance than the students in the control group.

Experimental research was conducted to test the hypotheses. One group set their personal goals each week while the other did not. An attitude survey, designed by the researcher, was administered to both groups twice - at the beginning and at the end of the treatment period - to determine whether setting goals led to a change in students' attitudes towards a reading course. Similarly, a reading comprehension test, designed by the researcher, was administered to both groups in the same way to determine whether setting goals led to higher performance. Giving the same test as both pre and posttest allowed the researcher to compare the performance of both groups before and after the treatment, therefore the posttest was given at the end of the treatment period, eight weeks later.

During the eight-week treatment, the subjects in the experimental group chose three to five goals of the course from the goal list prepared by the researcher and wrote them on the cards provided by the researcher. This process was carried out once a week. Moreover, every week the teacher ticked each goal that was practiced in the class on the goal checklist (see Appendix B). Examining this goal checklist revealed that all of the goals on the list were practiced at least once during the eight-week period. The one that was only practiced once was "reading easily for pleasure at their proficiency level". The ones that were practiced every week were, "using contextual clues to guess the meaning of new vocabulary, skimming for the topic of the passage, sequencing ideas in chronological order, asking and answering comprehension questions about a passage, chart, graph, or diagram, explaining the plot of a story, recognizing point of view, and stating their opinions about a reading passage." Examining the goal check-list also reveals that more goals were practiced during the third and sixth weeks of the treatment when compared to other weeks. The teacher reported that she brought some supplementary materials, including different genres, to the classroom during these weeks giving students a chance to practice more goals. The subjects in the control group were not provided with any goal list, but just followed their regular syllabus. In order to reduce the teacher variable, both groups were taught by the same teacher. The teacher reported that she taught the same materials in the same way in both classes.

Data Analysis Procedures

During the first stage of data analysis, the results of the questionnaire on goal awareness were analyzed. The results of this questionnaire showed that few goals could be articulated by students. Those that were written were vague and general, unlike the

specific goals the researcher used for this study (see Appendix I for the result of the questionnaire).

Then answers to the pre- and post-survey items were scored by the researcher. To score the pre- and post-surveys, each choice on the five point scale was given a value of from one to five. The scoring for the positive statements was as follows: Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, undecided = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 1. The scoring for the negative statements was as follows: Strongly agree = 1, Agree = 2, undecided = 3, Disagree = 4, Strongly disagree = 5. Item scores were averaged across subjects to obtain the mean values of the attitudes towards the reading course.

Each correct answer on the pre and posttest was scored one point. Wrong or omitted items were given zero points. The total possible maximum score for the reading test was 50 points.

In order to analyze the data, five t-tests were run to find out the differences between (a) attitudes towards reading in general and attitudes towards the reading course, (b) attitudes of male and female subjects, (c) attitudes of high proficient and low proficient subjects, (d) attitude scores of the experimental and control groups according to post survey results, (e) posttest results of both groups.

Results of the Study

The data gathered were analyzed according to the research questions which were;

- 1) What are the attitudes of the students towards their reading course at Gaziosmanpaşa University, in Tokat?
- 2) Does the setting and awareness of their personal goals affect students' attitudes towards the reading course?

- 3) Does the students' awareness of their goals affect their success in the reading course?

Findings on the First Research Question

The first research question asked about the attitudes of the students towards the reading course at Gaziosmanpaşa University, in Tokat. Attitudes of the students towards reading in general and towards the reading course were compared. Further analysis looked for differences in gender and proficiency level.

Is there any difference between the attitudes towards reading in general (items 23, 26, 32, 33, 34) and attitudes towards the reading course (other items)?

Items 23, 26, 32, 33, 34 on the survey asked about the attitudes of the subjects towards reading in general and the other items asked about the attitudes of subjects towards their reading course. The number of the students who answered these two different item types was equal. Therefore, this allowed the researcher to make this comparison. Table 3 shows the mean values of attitudes towards reading in general and attitudes towards the reading course according to pre survey results.

As can be seen in the table, the mean value of the attitude scores towards reading in general is 4.15, the same value for attitudes towards the reading course is 3.55. The table shows that students' attitudes towards reading in general are more positive than their attitudes towards the reading course. To find out whether the difference between these two means is significant, a t-test was run and the observed t value was -7.73, which is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 3

Mean Values of Attitudes Towards Reading and Attitudes Towards the Reading Course

Variables	N	M	SD	SE of Mean	t-value
ATR	52	4.15	0.98	6.10	-7.73**
ATRC	52	3.55	1.19	2.78	

Note. ATR = Attitudes towards reading in general; ATRC = Attitudes towards the reading course; N = Number; M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation; SE = Standard Error

** $p < 0.01$

Is there any difference between the attitudes of Male and Female Subjects?

In order to answer this question, the scores of thirty-two male and twenty female students on the pre survey were used. Table 4 illustrates the mean values of the responses given by male and female students.

Table 4

Mean Values of Responses Given by Male and Female Subjects on the Pre Survey.

Subjects	N	M	SD	SE of Mean	t-value
Male	32	3.51	0.41	7.23	-0.82
Female	20	3.61	0.43	0.10	

Note. N = Number; M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation; SE = Standard Error

Table 4 shows that according to pre survey results, the mean value of the attitude scores of male students is 3.51 and the same value for female students is 3.61. The table shows that female students have slightly more positive attitudes than male students. To find out whether the difference between these two means is significant, a t-test was run and the observed t value was -0.82, which is not significant at the 0.05 level.

Is there any difference between the attitudes of high proficient and low proficient students?

In order to find out whether there was a significant difference between the attitudes of high proficient and low proficient students, pre survey results were used. First of all, students were ranked according to the scores they got from the pretest; the student who got the highest score was placed into the first place and the one who got the lowest score into the last place. Then, these fifty two students were divided into three groups: The students with the seventeen highest scores were placed into the "high proficient" group, and the students with the seventeen lowest scores were placed into the "low proficient" group, while the other eighteen students were placed into an "average proficient" group. Table 5 shows the mean values of attitude scores of high proficient and low proficient subjects.

As table 5 illustrates, the mean value of the attitude scores received from seventeen high proficient students on the pre survey was 3.79 and the mean value of the attitude scores received from seventeen low proficient students on the pre survey was 3.38. The table shows that high proficient students had more positive attitudes towards the reading course than the low proficient students. The significance of the

Table 5

Mean Values of Responses Given by the High Proficient and Low Proficient Subjects on the Pre Survey.

Subjects	N	M	SD	SE of Mean	t-value
High Proficient	17	3.79	0.39	9.44	3.25*
Low Proficient	17	3.38	0.34	8.26	

Note. N = Number; M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation; SE = Standard Error

* $p < 0.05$.

means obtained from the pre survey was examined by computing a t-test and it was found that the t value was 3.25, which was significant at the 0.05 level.

Findings on the Second Research Question

The second research question asked whether setting goals affected attitudes towards the reading course. Table 6 illustrates the mean value of the responses given by each subject in the experimental class on the attitude survey administered at the beginning and at the end of the treatment. Moreover, it shows the changes in attitudes from the first administration to the second.

It can be observed that all the subjects, except for subjects 2, 3, and 12 demonstrated a positive change in their attitudes towards the reading course. The total mean gain of the subjects in the experimental class was 4.67.

Table 6

Mean Values and Gain Scores of Responses Given by the Subjects in the Experimental Class on the Surveys Given at the Beginning (Pre Survey) and End (Post Survey) of Treatment.

Subjects	Pre Survey	Post Survey	Gain
1	3.11	3.66	0.55
2	3.17	2.91	-0.26
3	3.80	3.51	-0.29
4	3.77	4.06	0.29
5	3.66	4.57	0.91
6	3.69	4.20	0.51
7	3.69	4.06	0.37
8	3.34	3.46	0.12
9	3.89	4.60	0.71
10	3.00	3.71	0.71
11	3.91	4.37	0.46
12	3.80	2.86	-0.94
13	3.60	3.89	0.29
14	4.23	4.54	0.31
15	3.63	3.74	0.11
16	3.69	3.71	0.02
17	3.97	4.00	0.03
18	3.74	4.51	0.77
MEANS	3.65	3.91	0.26
TOTAL	65.69	70.36	4.67

Table 7 shows the mean value of the responses given by each subject in the control class on the survey administered at the beginning and the end of the research period. The changes in the subjects' attitudes are also illustrated.

As can be seen from the table, subjects in the control group demonstrate a somewhat mixed situation. Attitudes of subjects 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 16, 17, and 18 became

Table 7

Mean Values and Gain Scores of Responses Given by the Subjects in the Control Group on the Survey Given at the Beginning (Pre Survey) and End (Post Survey) of Treatment.

Subjects	Pre Survey	Post Survey	Gain
1	3.06	2.63	-0.43
2	3.29	3.20	-0.09
3	3.89	4.09	0.20
4	4.34	3.49	-0.85
5	4.34	3.80	-0.54
6	4.00	3.89	-0.11
7	3.63	3.69	0.06
8	4.09	3.46	-0.63
9	4.26	4.11	-0.15
10	2.43	2.66	0.23
11	3.71	4.40	0.69
12	3.34	3.89	0.55
13	3.91	4.00	0.09
14	3.66	4.20	0.54
15	3.29	3.63	0.34
16	4.26	3.60	-0.66
17	3.51	3.14	-0.37
18	3.06	2.83	-0.23
19	3.71	4.06	0.35
MEANS	3.67	3.62	-0.05
TOTAL	69.78	68.77	-1.01

more negative, whereas attitudes of subjects 3, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 19 showed a positive change. The total mean gain of the subjects in the control group was -1.01.

Table 6 and 7 illustrate the change in the attitudes of subjects towards the reading course. The mean of attitude scores of the subjects in the experimental class (3.91) exceeds the mean of attitude scores of the subjects in the control class (3.62).

Furthermore, the subjects in the experimental class demonstrated an increase in attitudes, while the subjects in the control class showed a decrease.

Table 8 shows the scores of the experimental and control groups according to the post survey.

Table 8

Comparison of Scores of Subjects in Experimental and Control Groups on Post Survey

Variable	N	M	SD	t-value
Experimental	18	3.91	0.52	1.70
Control	19	3.62	0.52	

Note. N = Number; M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation

As can be seen from the table, the mean value of the experimental group is 3.91, whereas the mean value of the control group is 3.62. In order to find out whether the difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups was significant or not, a t-test was run. The observed t value of 1.70 was not significant. Thus, the first null hypothesis of no relationship between the goal setting and students' attitudes towards a reading course was accepted. However, it should be noted that more of the subjects in the experimental group (15 as compared to 9 in the control group) became more positive in their attitudes towards the reading course. Moreover, the overall effect of the treatment in the experimental group was positive, whereas the overall effect in the control group was negative. This positive effect may also suggest

that if the treatment had been carried out for eight weeks as planned before, the results might have been statistically significant.

Findings on the Third Research Question

The third research question asked whether setting goals affects students' achievement in the reading course. Two t-tests, one for the pretest and one for the posttest, were applied to determine whether there was any difference between the achievement scores of experimental and control groups.

Results of the Pretest

The pretest was administered in order to determine the performance of subjects prior to the treatment and to choose the class which got the lower scores as the experimental group. Table 9 shows the scores of the experimental and control groups according to the pretest.

Table 9

T-test for Independent Samples (Pretest)

Variable	N	M	SD	SE of Mean	t-value
Exp. Grp.	27	26.00	9.87	2.33	-0.36
Con. Grp.	25	27.10	8.53	1.96	

Note. N = Number; M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation; SE = Standard Error

As can be seen in the table, the mean score of experimental group was 26.00, whereas the score for the control group was 27.10. Application of t-test analysis for

independent samples revealed that the difference between the means of the experimental and control groups was not significant at the 0.05 level.

Results of the Posttest

The posttest was given to the two groups in order to measure the effect of goal setting on achievement. The test was given eight weeks after the pretest so as to see the effects of the intervention. In this test, subjects were asked to answer the same questions about the same texts that appeared in the pretest. Table 10 shows the results of the posttest.

Table 10

T-test for Independent Samples (Posttest Results)

Variable	N	M	SD	SE of Mean	t-value
Exp. Grp.	18	32.56	9.76	2.30	0.75
Con. Grp.	19	29.90	11.69	2.68	

Note. N = Number; M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation; SE = Standard Error

In table 10, the scores of the experimental and control groups were compared according to posttest results. The mean score of experimental group was 32.56, whereas the mean score of the control group was 29.90, suggesting that overall the experimental group outperformed the control group. In order to compare the change in scores of the subjects in the experimental and control groups, a t-test was run. The observed t value of

0.75 was not significant. Thus, the null hypothesis of no relationship between the goal setting and students' achievement in the reading course was accepted.

Conclusions

The results of this study indicated that there was a significant relationship between attitudes towards reading in general and attitudes towards the reading course in that attitudes towards reading in general were more positive than attitudes towards the reading course. The same relationship was found between the attitudes of high proficient and low proficient students; high proficient students demonstrated more positive attitudes than low proficient students. However, there was not a significant relationship between the attitudes of female and male students.

The results also indicated that there is not a relationship between students' goal setting and their attitudes towards the reading course. Therefore, the first hypothesis was rejected. However, there was some indication that students who set their personal goals each week became more positive in their attitudes towards the reading course than the students in the control group. When the mean scores of the both groups were taken into consideration, the mean scores of the experimental group subjects who set their personal goals each week were found to be 3.65 for the pre survey and 3.91 for the post survey. On the other hand, the subjects in the control group, who did not have any treatment, had a mean score of 3.67 on the pre survey and 3.62 on the post survey. These results indicate that although the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre survey were lower than that of the control group, they outperformed the control group in the post survey.

Similarly, findings demonstrated that there was no significant relationship between students' goal setting and their achievement in the reading course. Thus, the second hypothesis was rejected, too. However, the results indicated that students who set their personal goals each week outperformed the students in the control group according to posttest results.

In conclusion, the analysis of the data reveals that although the setting of personal goals fostered their positive attitudes in students and increased their achievement to some degree, this change was not significant.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

Summary of the Study

This study sought to investigate whether students' setting personal goals affects their success in and attitudes towards a reading course. The study was carried out at Gaziosmanpaşa University, Tokat, Turkey. Two preparatory classes were selected, one as the experimental and the other as the control group. The students in the experimental group were provided with the goal list of the reading course every week and they were required to choose some of these goals and write them down on small cards to be practiced in the subsequent week. However, students in the control group were not provided with a goal list and were not required to write down goals to be practiced in the subsequent week; they just followed their regular syllabus. In order to reduce the teacher variable, both groups were taught by the same teacher. The treatment was carried out for eight weeks.

Three research questions were tested in this study. The first research question investigated the attitudes of the students at Gaziosmanpaşa University towards reading in general and towards their reading course. Attitudes were further compared according to students' gender and proficiency level. The second research question investigated the effect of goal setting on the attitudes of students towards the reading course. The final research question investigated the effect of goal setting on the success of students in the reading course.

In order to answer these questions, a pre survey and a pretest were administered prior to the treatment. The results of the pre survey were used to answer the first research question. After the eight-week treatment, subjects were given the same survey

and the same posttest that they took prior to the treatment. In the survey, subjects were required to respond to forty items in a Likert scale format ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". In the test, subjects were provided with three reading passages. The first two passages were followed by forty-two multiple choice questions and the third passage was followed by eight fill-in-the-blanks questions. Thus, there were a total of fifty questions in the test.

Discussion of Findings

The First Research Question

The first research question asked about the attitudes of the students towards the reading course. Overall, attitudes of the students were examined and then compared according to attitudes towards reading in general and attitudes towards the reading course, and then according to gender, and proficiency level. The results of the initial survey were used to answer the first research question. The data analysis showed that there was a significant difference between the attitudes towards reading in general and attitudes towards the reading course, with students having more positive attitudes towards reading in general than they had towards the reading course. The difference between these two kinds of attitudes were found to be statistically significant. Female students had more positive attitudes than male students, but the results were not statistically significant. Also, high proficient students showed more positive attitudes than low proficient students at a statistically significant level.

The Second Research Question

The results of the data analysis for the second research question demonstrated that, although subjects in the experimental group appeared to develop more positive

attitudes towards the reading course as a result of the treatment, the difference between the attitudes of both groups according to post survey results was statistically insignificant, so the first hypothesis which claimed that setting goals leads to more positive attitudes was rejected. This result suggests that setting goals doesn't foster positive student attitudes towards a reading course, or at least not to a significant degree.

The Third Research Question

Finally, the data analysis for the third research question demonstrated that, although subjects in the experimental group outperformed those in the control group, the difference between the posttest scores of both groups was not statistically significant, thus, the second hypothesis, that setting goals leads to higher performance, was rejected, too. This result suggests that setting goals doesn't lead students to increase their achievement in the reading course, even though the experimental group outperformed the control group. However, although the treatment for the experimental group was less than planned, only five weeks as compared to seven weeks for the control group, the experimental group showed more increase (6.56) in their mean score than that of the control group (2.80) and they outperformed the control group in the posttest. Off-setting this, is the possible experimental factor, that being subjects of experimentation might have caused the difference in performance in the experimental group.

The results of the study overall should be interpreted in the light of the problems and limitations of the study.

Limitations of the Study

This study had certain limitations in investigating the effects of goal setting on the attitudes of students towards a reading course and their success in the same course.

These limitations are related to subjects, length of treatment, unexpected problems in the procedure, the teacher's behavior in both classes, and using the same test as pretest and posttest.

Subjects

The first limitation of this study is that the subjects were limited to Turkish pre-intermediate level university prep students. Moreover, the number of the subjects was small ($n=37$) and they were not randomly assigned to groups. Therefore, it can be argued that the findings are limited to 37 (17 female and 20 male) Turkish undergraduate students at the pre-intermediate level of proficiency in the preparatory program of Gaziosmanpasa University, Tokat, Turkey. If there is to be further research on the effects of goal setting on the attitudes and success of students, this limitation should be considered and the number of the participants increased.

The second limitation concerning subjects was that the study was restricted to pre intermediate level students. This further restricts the generalizability of the study. If it were applied to other levels, the results might have been different. Moreover, the teacher of the course, who also conducted the treatment for eight weeks, reported that some students in the experimental group were reluctant to carry out the requirements of the study.

Length of Treatment

The length of the treatment, an eight-week period, was not enough to talk about the effects of goal setting on the attitudes and success of students. Since attitudes are deep rooted (Gaa, 1973) and changing them is a difficult task (Brooks, 1996), they take

much time to change. Therefore, the length of the treatment should have been longer.

Extending the treatment time might have led to different results.

Unexpected Problems in the Procedure

During the fifth and sixth weeks of the treatment, the teacher of the course, who was also conducting the study, was ill, and so the treatment had to be interrupted for two weeks. However, since the reading courses of the experimental and control groups were on different days of the week, during her illness the control group missed only one week. Moreover, because of a national holiday, there were no lessons for the experimental group for one week but there were lessons for the control group. As a result, during this eight-week treatment period, the experimental group had only five weeks of lessons whereas the control group had seven weeks of lessons.

The Teacher's Behavior

Another limitation of this study is related to the teacher's behavior in both classes. Since the teacher was the only person who carried out the treatment for eight weeks, her behavior in both classes in terms of how she actually delivered the material is unknown, an important limitation of the study. As mentioned earlier, the original intention of having the teacher do a self-report on how goals were practiced in the class was not implemented successfully.

Pre and Posttest

The same test was used as pretest and posttest in this study. Considering the short period of treatment, the recall effect might not have been removed completely, especially for subjects who were familiar with Elvis Presley. Therefore it is possible that some subjects answered the questions correctly because they had not forgotten them. It

was also not possible, given the limited time frame and small student population, to test the internal reliability and validity of the instruments, although the pilot helped to standardize question interpretation on the part of those taking the test.

Pedagogical Implications

The purpose for doing this research was to reveal the attitudes of the students towards the reading course and to see whether setting goals fostered positive attitudes and increased their proficiency. Although not statistically significant, the study results indicate that students in the experimental group showed more positive attitudes and higher performance than the students in the control group. Keeping in mind the experimentation factor mentioned earlier, the results can be seen as evidence that training helped foster positive student attitudes towards the reading course and increase student proficiency. These findings are consistent with the previous research that when students are aware of the goals of the course they are expected to attain, they develop more positive attitudes towards the subject matter (Bennett, 2000; Deloris, 1992; Mathewson, 1994), they take responsibility (Bennett, 2000), they are more interested in the lesson, more motivated to learn, and as a result, more successful in the course (Alegre & Moss, 1999; Madden, 1997; Page-Voth & Graham, 1999; Schunk & Rice, 1991). Therefore, spending some classroom time explaining what is expected of students is recommended, and should be encouraged in language classrooms. Setting their own goals may also give students a chance to be more autonomous learners.

Moreover, the findings of this study also support the importance of assessing adult learners' attitudes towards their reading course because, as Brooks (1996) suggests, attitudes "serve as a motivational device" (p. 8). Therefore, if teachers can become aware

of negative attitudes, they may help students improve their attitudes. By the same token, Smith (1990) states that knowing the attitudes of students and holding discussions with individual students regarding their demands and feelings about learning help the teachers choose materials that will enhance students' motivation,

Implications for Further Research

Based on the findings of this study, suggestions for further research can be made. First, the study needs to be replicated with a larger number of subjects. Further investigations are needed to determine whether the conclusions of this study can be generalized to different levels of students.

In this study, nineteen reading goals were used to increase student awareness. In further research, instead of such a large number of goals, perhaps only ten goals could be focused on to make students more aware of what is expected of them and to give them more opportunity to practice each goal. In this regard, in a study by Rothkopf and Billington (1975) showed that students with shorter list of goals produced a higher level of performance than the students receiving a longer list of goals.

In a further research study, teaching practice should be more closely linked with the goals of the course. In this study, students in the experimental group randomly chose goals from the goal list to be practiced in the subsequent week and thus, some of the goals they chose and wrote down on their cards were not explicitly practiced in the class during that specific week. So, instead of having students choose the goals randomly, the researcher and the teacher of the course could examine the curriculum and the material and then determine the goals to be practiced each week, prior to the treatment. Students

could just choose from those goals that were to be practiced in the subsequent week.

This would allow students to practice every goal they had written on their cards.

Another suggestion has to do with better control of implementation. In further research, a self-report could be collected from the teacher after each lesson, stating what goals were practiced and how they were practiced in the classroom. Classroom observation could be added to check on the reliability of the self-report.

In this study, academic goals were used to increase student achievement and promote positive attitudes. However, there might have been a mismatch between academic goals and students' personal goals, which might have caused negative results. Therefore, further research could include students' personal goals in order to investigate the effect of goal setting in general on success and attitudes.

Finally, this study could be carried out with different language learning skills. This study focused on the relationship between goal setting in a reading course and the attitudes and success of students in this course. It could be replicated by using the goals of a writing, listening, or speaking course.

Given the importance of attitudes towards different language skills and effect of goal setting on attitudes and success, further research is needed to investigate this topic and its application in Turkish classrooms.

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APPENDIX A

READING GOALS

Specific goals of the reading course that the researcher used for this study.
(Retrieved November 25,2001, from
<http://daphne.palomar.edu/lchen/ESLSite/readinggoals.html>)

Students will be able to recognize the main idea of a text;

- 1) Underline the topic sentence,
- 2) Underline the vocabulary related to main idea, and
- 3) Underline the main idea and supporting details.

Students will be able to develop vocabulary learning skills;

- 1) Use contextual clues to guess the meaning of new vocabulary,
- 2) Have an expanded vocabulary based on knowledge of prefixes and suffixes,
- 3) Identify relationships marked by conjunctions and reference words, and
- 4) Begin to use a monolingual dictionary.

Students will be able to use extensive reading skills;

- 1) Read easily for pleasure at their proficiency level, and
- 2) Read various kinds of texts (technical, factual, popular press, editorial, interviews, literature, headlines etc.).

Students will be able to use reading skills / strategies;

- 1) Scan for specific information,
- 2) Skim for the topic of the passage,
- 3) Sequence ideas in chronological order,
- 4) Infer target / intended audience, and
- 5) Understand how a text is organized.

Students will be able to understand the passage;

- 1) Ask and answer comprehension questions about a passage, chart, graph, or diagram,
- 2) Explain the plot of a story,
- 3) Recognize point of view, and
- 4) State their opinions about a reading passage.

Students will be able to;

- 1) Increase reading speed.

APPENDIX B

Goal Check-list

	The following goals have been practiced by the students this week	W 1	W 2	W 3	W 4	W 5	W 6	W 7	W 8
1	Underlining the topic sentence		√	√			√		
2	Underlining the main idea related to main idea		√	√			√		
3	Underlining the main idea and supporting details		√	√			√		
4	Using contextual clues to guess the meaning of new vocabulary	√	√	√			√		√
5	Having an expanded vocabulary based on knowledge of prefixes and suffixes			√			√		√
6	Identifying relationships marked by conjunctions and reference words			√			√		√
7	Beginning to use a monolingual dictionary			√			√		√
8	Reading easily for pleasure at their proficiency level						√		
9	Reading various kind of texts (popular press, interviews, literature, etc.)			√			√		√
10	Scanning for specific information	√		√			√		√
11	Skimming for the topic of the passage	√	√	√			√		√
12	Sequencing ideas in chronological order	√	√	√			√		√
13	Inferring target / intended audience		√	√					
14	Understanding how a text is organized			√			√		√
15	Asking and answering comprehension questions about a passage.	√	√	√			√		√
16	Explaining the plot of a story	√	√	√			√		√
17	Recognizing point of view	√	√	√			√		√
18	Stating their opinions about a reading passage	√	√	√			√		√
19	Increasing reading speed						√		√

Goal Cards

First Week

NAME :

SURNAME :

I want to practice the following goals for the next week

1)

.....

2)

.....

3)

.....

4)

.....

5)

.....

6)

.....

APPENDIX D

ATTITUDE SURVEY

Section I

Please fill in the following information

Name :

Class :

Department :

Sex : Male (.....) Female (.....)

Age :

First semester grade:

Section II

Please put a cross in the most appropriate box for you.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecid ed	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1) I wish I were more successful in the reading course					
2) I enjoy doing homework for the reading course.					
3) There is too much homework to do for the reading course.					
4) I like to make preparations for the reading course instead of watching TV					
5) I postpone doing the reading homework as long as I can.					
6) I don't believe I am successful in the reading course.					
7) I wish we had reading course everyday.					
8) The number of reading course hours per week is more than needed.					
9) If I had a chance I would cancel reading courses.					

10) I believe that students who are successful in reading courses will have more chance to get better jobs.					
11) I only study for the reading course when I have to.					
12) I like to study for the reading course even if I don't have homework to do.					
13) Studying for the reading course becomes boring after half an hour.					
14) Studying for the reading course is a waste of time					
15) Reading courses improve my vocabulary.					
16) I like to learn new words in the reading courses					
17) There is too much new vocabulary in the reading courses.					
18) Reading is my favorite subject.					
19) Reading course is a bore.					
20) I like reading but I don't like reading courses.					
21) I like to answer teacher's questions in reading courses.					
22) I am glad we have a reading course.					
23) Reading is boring.					
24) I learn the things I want to learn in the reading course.					
25) Reading course helps me discover my hidden abilities.					
26) I don't need to read well in English.					
27) Reading course is one of the important courses that we take.					
28) Reading course is difficult for me.					
29) Reading courses broaden my horizons.					
30) I have a lot of trouble in understanding the reading course.					
31) Reading course is easy.					

32) I enjoy reading in English.					
33) I am a good reader.					
34) Reading books is a waste of time.					
35) I wish we had more reading quizzes in the reading course.					
36) I learn new things in the reading course.					
37) Reading course is unnecessary.					
38) In order to learn English well it is necessary to take reading course.					
39) Reading courses don't really help me improve my reading.					
40) I am a successful student in the reading course.					

APPENDIX E

PRETEST / POSTTEST

Section ITHE KING IS DEAD:
LONG LIVE THE KING

1	Elvis Presley was born on January 8, 1935, in Tupelo, Mississippi. His parents were poor, and they were very religious. They often took Elvis to church. That's where he first learnt to sing. Most people feel that these religious songs had a big influence on Elvis's singing style.	30	A few months later, Elvis met "Colonel" Tom Parker. Parker took over Elvis's career. With his management, Elvis became popular not only in America but all over the world. Soon, Elvis had his first smash hits – <i>Hound Dog</i> , <i>All Shook Up</i> , and many others. They were wonderful songs, sung by the greatest pop star in the history of pop music.
5	Then, when he was a teenager, Elvis went to live in Memphis, Tennessee. He went to the local high school. He was an average student. The thing he was really interested in was music.	35	Some years later, Elvis was making Hollywood films like <i>Love Me Tender</i> and <i>King Creole</i> . He made many films – some people say too many. Some of them were not very good. But Elvis's fans were always loyal. They went to see all his films and they bought all his records
10	One day, in 1955, he took his guitar to the Sun Recording Studio in Memphis. There he recorded two country 'n' western songs for his mother's birthday. All her life she was very close to Elvis. One of the songs was called <i>That's All Right, Mama</i> . The recording studio liked the songs and they liked the singer. His style was a mixture of two traditions, white country 'n' western, and blues – the music of black people in the South.	40	Elvis died at the age of 42. It was a sudden death and it came as a shock. Everyone knew Elvis was the king of rock 'n' roll. And everyone knows he will always be the king of the rock 'n' roll. Long live Elvis.
15		45	
20		50	
25			

(Davies, E., Whitney, N., Pike-Baky, M., & Blaes, L. (1990). *Task reading*. Cambridge University Press.)

A) Skim and scan the passage to answer questions 1-4 below. You have 2 minutes.

- 1) When was Elvis Presley born?
 - a) in 1935
 - b) in 1835
 - c) in 1933
- 2) Who took over Elvis's career?
 - a) His parents
 - b) Tom Parker
 - c) His fans

- 3) What is this passage about?
 - a) Elvis Presleys's films
 - b) The king of England
 - c) Elvis Presley's life
- 4) Where did Elvis go to high school?
 - a) In Tupelo
 - b) In Mississippi
 - c) In Memphis

Section II

THE KING IS DEAD: LONG LIVE THE KING

1	Elvis Presley was born on January 8, 1935, in Tupelo, Mississippi. His parents were poor, and they were very religious. They often took Elvis to church. That's where he first learnt to sing. Most people feel that these religious songs had a big influence on Elvis's singing style.	30	A few months later, Elvis met "Colonel" Tom Parker. Parker took over Elvis's career. With his management, Elvis became popular not only in America but all over the world. Soon, Elvis had his first smash hits – <i>Hound Dog</i> , <i>All Shook Up</i> , and many others. They were wonderful songs, sung by the greatest pop star in the history of pop music.
5	Then, when he was a teenager, Elvis went to live in Memphis, Tennessee. He went to the local high school. He was an average student. The thing he was really interested in was music.	35	Some years later, Elvis was making Hollywood films like <i>Love Me Tender</i> and <i>King Creole</i> . He made many films – some people say too many. Some of <u>them</u> were not very good. But Elvis's fans were always loyal. <u>They</u> went to see all his films and they bought all his records
10	One day, in 1955, he took his guitar to the Sun Recording Studio in Memphis. There he recorded two country 'n' western songs for his mother's birthday. All her life she was very close to Elvis. One of the songs was called <i>That's All Right, Mama</i> . The recording studio liked the songs and they liked the singer. His style was a mixture of two traditions, white country 'n' western, and <u>blues</u> – the music of black people in the South.	40	Elvis died at the age of 42. It was a sudden death and it came as a shock. Everyone knew Elvis was the king of rock 'n' roll. And everyone knows he will always be the king of the rock 'n' roll. Long live Elvis.
15		45	
20		50	
25			

(Davies, E., Whitney, N., Pike-Baky, M., & Blaes, L. (1990). *Task reading*. Cambridge University Press.)

B) Answer the questions from 5 to 25 according to the passage above.

- 5) Elvis Presley's family.....
- didn't like him
 - were not religious.
 - was not very rich
- 6) Elvis's fans watched all his films because,.....
- his films were very good
 - his fans liked him very much
 - his fans were very rich

- 7) If Elvis Presley were alive now, he would be.....
 - a) a young adult.
 - b) 67 years old.
 - c) a middle-aged person
- 8) People said some of his films were.....
 - a) not very good
 - b) about his mother
 - c) about his life
- 9) Elvis became very famous.....
 - a) when he was a student
 - b) after he met Tom Parker
 - c) with the help of his father
- 10) How many films did he make?
 - a) many
 - b) few
 - c) four
- 11) Elvis died
 - a) after a long illness
 - b) an old man
 - c) in 1977
- 12) “They” in line 42 refers to
 - a) Elvis’s father and mother
 - b) Elvis’s songs
 - c) Elvis’s fans
- 13) What did Elvis like most in high school?
 - a) music
 - b) films
 - c) his teacher
- 14) Elvis Presley learned to sing by
 - a) singing western songs
 - b) singing for his mother’s birthday
 - c) singing religious songs.
- 15) Why did he call one of his songs “ That’s all right Mama”?
 - a) Because his mother died
 - b) Because he loved his mother.
 - c) Because his father wrote the song

- 16) Why did his family take him to church?
- a) Because they were religious
 - b) Because they wanted him to be famous
 - c) Because they wanted him to be a musician
- 17) What do most people think about Elvis? They think that...
- a) Elvis was not a successful singer.
 - b) songs in the church affected Elvis's singing.
 - c) Elvis's films were excellent
- 18) Which is NOT true for Elvis's mother?
- a) She took her son to church
 - b) She gave birth to her son in Texas
 - c) She was close to her soon
- 19) Where did Elvis first record his songs?
- a) In Memphis
 - b) In church
 - c) In high school
- 20) Which one is true?
- a) Elvis's family was religious but not poor
 - b) Hound Dog is one of Elvis's popular songs.
 - c) Elvis died when he was singing
- 21) The word "blues" in line 25 refers to
- a) black people
 - b) a city
 - c) a kind of music
- 22) This story is about.....
- a) a famous person
 - b) a poor family
 - c) a king
- 23) When Elvis moved from Mississippi to Memphis,
- a) he was about 13-15 years old
 - b) he was quite old
 - c) he was middle-aged
- 24) "them" in line 41 refer to
- a) Elvis's films
 - b) Elvis's fans
 - c) Elvis's songs

25) What can be said about his death?

- a) He died as the king of England
- b) It was an unexpected death
- c) No one was surprised by it

1	Betsy Allison Walter is an 8-year-old Manhattan schoolgirl who became very upset when her parents decided to get a divorce. At first,	30	The Mayor answered Betsy. He wrote, "Thank you for the letter. I was saddened to learn of the difficult times you are experiencing now. It is
5	Betsy thought that maybe she could get them back together. She invited them both to her dance recital, hoping they would sit together and talk, but they sat on different sides of the room.	35	important for you to share your feelings and thoughts with someone during this time. I wish there was an easy solution to these problems, but there is not. Please remember that you are loved and that people care about you. All the best. Ed Koch."
10	After that, Betsy decided that she needed to get advice from someone. She talked to her school guidance counselor. The counselor told her that a lot of kids had the same problem. She said that of the 400 kids in her school, probably 300 of <u>them</u> had parents who were divorced. She told Betsy that those kids had gotten through it all right and Betsy would, too. <u>That</u> was not what Betsy wanted to hear.	40	A radio station heard about Betsy's letter to the Mayor and interviewed her on the radio. The interviewer asked Betsy if the Mayor's letter reassured her. "No," said Betsy. "I want some answers to my real questions, not just the same answers that people keep telling me."
15	Finally, Betsy decided to write to the mayor of New York, Mayor Koch. Asked why she wrote to the Mayor for advice, Betsy said, "Because he's somebody who I thought was very good to us, because he's the mayor, and because he knows a lot of things, so I thought he would know about <u>this</u> , too."	45	So, Betsy had decided to write her own book. It was a very short book called <i>A Book About Divorce</i> . Betsy read her book on the radio.
20		50	"It's not your fault when your parents get divorced. Why does it have to be you? Because Mommy and Daddy don't love each other any more. Remember, it's OK to be sad and cry. Tell someone about your feelings. That's all."
25		55	

(Numrich, C. (1997). *Face the issues*. Longman)

C) Answer the following questions from 26 to 42 according to the passage above.

26) Betsy talked to her school guidance counselor

- a) because the counselor was her father
- b) to get some advice from her
- c) to learn how many students had the same problem.

- 27) What does Betsy think of the mayor of New York?
- a) He can help her
 - b) He doesn't know anything
 - c) He is a good writer
- 28) Betsy became very upset because,
- a) her parents didn't come to her dance recital
 - b) the Mayor didn't reply to her letter
 - c) her parents were about to divorce
- 29) Why did Betsy invite her parents to her dance recital?
- a) She hoped that they would divorce during the recital
 - b) She hoped that they would find a name for her book
 - c) She hoped that they would talk to each other
- 30) What does "them" in line 16 refer to?
- a) students
 - b) Betsy's friends
 - c) Betsy's parents
- 31) What happened at the dance recital?
- a) Her parents danced
 - b) Her parents didn't talk
 - c) Her parents divorced
- 32) What did Mr. Koch do when he received Betsy's letter?
- a) He wrote a letter back to Betsy
 - b) He solved Betsy's problem
 - c) He phoned Betsy
- 33) Why did Betsy decide to write her book?
- a) To make a lot of money
 - b) Because the Mayor wanted her to write it
 - c) Because she wasn't pleased with the answers she got
- 34) This story is about
- a) advantages of divorce
 - b) a girl who has happy parents
 - c) a girl's problem
- 35) What does "that" in line 19 refer to?
- a) Counselor's advice
 - b) Betsy's school
 - c) The dance recital

- 36) Which one is the best title for this story?
- a) Living Through Divorce
 - b) How To Become Famous
 - c) The Mayor and a Girl
- 37) What kind of advice does Betsy give in her book?
- a) To write a book when you have a problem
 - b) To tell your problems and feelings to people
 - c) To divorce if you are unhappy
- 38) It can be inferred from the story that
- a) Betsy has a happy family
 - b) There is a lot of divorce in New York
 - c) every child can write a book
- 39) What is TRUE about the Mayor?
- a) He replied to Betsy's letter
 - b) He is a friend of Betsy's father
 - c) He solved Betsy's problem
- 40) More than half of the students' parents at Betsy's school
- a) are married
 - b) are divorced
 - c) love their children
- 41) What did the school guidance counselor tell Betsy?
- a) To invite her parents to her dance recital
 - b) Most of the students' parents were divorced
 - c) There were 300 students in their school
- 42) What does "this" in line 28 refer to?
- a) Betsy's letter
 - b) New York
 - c) Betsy's problem

Section III

(bring he at noticed his robbery police apparently)

C) Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words above.

Police said that Rob Bailey planned his bank (43) very carefully, but he didn't think to (44) any paper with him – and that's what got him in trouble. Bailey (45) found an envelope in(46) pocket and wrote on the back of it "Give me all your money". This is what(47) gave to the bank teller. Unfortunately for Bailey, he had written his note on an envelope that contained a letter from his mother. The bank teller (48) Bailey's name and address on the envelope as soon as he handed it to her. She gave the envelope to the (49) and the police soon arrested him (50) home.

(Richards, J. C., & Sandy, C. (2000). *Passages*. Cambridge University Press)

APPENDIX F

Questionnaire to determine goal awareness

Dear Students,

I am an instructor at the department of Foreign Languages at Gaziosmanpaşa University. At the same time I am a student at MA TEFL at Bilkent University. I am doing a research project at the moment and I need your help. If you could answer the following questions, I will be happy. Your names will be used only for record keeping. Your answers will be kept confidential in any reports made from this data.

Thank you

Dursun DEMİR

NAME :

SURNAME :

- 1) Why are you taking the reading course?
- 2) Is the reading course important to you? Why, why not?
- 3) What do you expect to learn in the reading course?
- 4) What do you want to learn in the reading course?

APPENDIX G

Informed Consent Form

Dear Students,

I attend MA TEFL Program at Bilkent University. I am doing a research project about students' attitudes toward the reading course at Gaziosmanpaşa University at the moment. I would appreciate it if you could respond to the following attitude survey by putting a cross in the most appropriate box for you. Your answers will be kept confidential and any information regarding your identity will not be included in the reports (thesis, article) made from this data.

Please circle the most appropriate choice for you and not leave any item unanswered. Your sincere and true answers are very important for this study to reach its aim. Thank you for your time and help.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact me at the e-mail address given below.

Thank you,

Dursun DEMİR

MA TEFL Program
Bilkent University
Ankara

e-mail: dursun@bilkent.edu.tr

I have read the information of the form and I agree to participate in a research study of education. I am aware that there is no risk involved in my participation. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time. It has also been made clear by the researcher that my name will not be used in the reports.

Number

Name

Signature

Date

APPENDIX H

Reading Passages Used in Orientation

EGYPT

The climate of Egypt is mainly hot and dry. Apart from the Valley of the River Nile, which runs through the country from south to north, it consists entirely of desert.

In the summer, the temperature often reaches 45 °C in the south of the country, and 30 °C in the north.

In winter, the weather is cooler, and along the north coast it is often cloudy, with occasional rain.

In Cairo it rains on average for three days a year, and in the south of Egypt rain is almost unknown. There are often gentle breezes from the north throughout the year, except during March and April, when a hot, dusty wind blows from the south.

(Doff, A. & Jones, C. (1991). *Language in use*. Cambridge University Press)

THE FUNNIEST FILM

One day a man took his dog to the cinema. He bought two tickets and they went inside. The usherette was very surprised, but she showed them to their places. Their seats were in the stalls, at the side.

The usherette was even more surprised when the film began and the dog watched it. He was obviously interested in it. But when the hero died tragically, she was completely amazed; the dog began to cry! He cried like a baby.

After the film, she spoke to the man. "Excuse me, but I've never seen a dog cry in a cinema before."

"Well it was a very sad film," the man replied.

"But your dog was so interested in the film. It is the most amazing thing I've ever seen."

The man nodded, "Yes, it's very surprising. To tell the truth, I can't understand it. He hated the book."

(Kandiller, B. & Velioğlu, A. (1996). *Reader at work I*. Ankara: Middle East Technical University)

APPENDIX I

The results of the questionnaire to determine goal awareness

Responses of the students	Number of students who gave the responses
To understand the texts	24
To develop reading skills	18
To have an expanded vocabulary	10
To ask and answer comprehension questions about a passage	4
To increase reading speed	2

Number of goals written by students	Number of students who wrote the goals
0	09
1	28
2	14
3	02